



Seattle Human Rights Commission

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Contact: Chris Stearns, Chairman
202-257-6428 (cell)
cstearns@hobbsstrauss.com

STATEMENT OF THE SEATTLE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION On Nomination of Pierce Murphy to Become New OPA Director

Chris Stearns, Chairman of the Seattle Human Rights Commission said:

“OPA Director Nominee Pierce Murphy, if confirmed, will have to work hard to earn the trust of Seattle’s communities of color. Community members have watched video of police uses of force on television and, after all is said and done, have been left wondering if the Office of Professional Accountability can effectively discipline police officers.

“As we wrote in our 2011 [Report](#) on Police Accountability, “... inherent to human rights is the ability to obtain due process and an appropriate remedy when or if rights are violated, even if a government official commits the violation.” We concluded in our report that Seattle’s current police oversight system falls short of human rights standards because it (1) lacks a neutral or impartial decision-maker, (2) lacks transparency, (3) does not provide the complainant with access to files, evidence, witnesses or the decision-maker, and (4) is not subject to review by an independent and neutral decision-maker.

“Bringing reform to the OPA will require that Murphy have a clear and powerful vision, a sensitive ear to community concerns, and a willingness to work with the community, the Council, the Community Police Commission, and others in making meaningful reform.”

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Chris Stearns, *Chairman*
Seattle Human Rights Commission
www.seattle.gov/humanrights

Chris Stearns, *Of Counsel*
T 202.257.6428

HOBBS STRAUS DEAN & WALKER, LLP
Washington, DC | Portland, OR | Oklahoma City | Sacramento | Seattle

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